

INSIGHT

T U R K E Y

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Muhittin Ataman

Social Sciences University of Ankara

ASSISTANT EDITORS

İbrahim Efe
Kilis 7 Aralık University

Gloria Shkurti Özdemir
SETA

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

Muhammet Koçak
Florida International University

ASSISTANT TO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Assala Khettache
Aberystwyth University

Published by SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research

ADVISORY BOARD

Fahrettin Altun Turkish Presidency Directorate of Communications, **Azmi Bishara** Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, **Ali Çarkoğlu** Koç University, **Burhanettin Duran** Social Sciences University of Ankara, **Fawaz Gerges** London School of Economics, **Nurşin Ateşoğlu Güney** Nişantaşı University, **Farid Hafez** Salzburg University, **Şükrü Hanioglu** Princeton University, **Metin Heper** Bilkent University, **Kemal İnat** Sakarya University, **Aristotle Kallis** Keele University, **Fuat Keyman** Sabancı University, **Muqtedar Khan** University of Delaware, **Mustafa Kibaroglu** MEF University, **Malik Mufti** Tufts University, **Basheer M. Nafi** Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, **Ziya Öniş** Koç University, **Mesut Özcan** Turkish Diplomacy Academy, **Tobias Schumacher** College of Europe, **Dmitri Trenin** The Carnegie Moscow Center, **Ali Resul Usul** İstanbul Medipol University, **Ramazan Yıldırım** İstanbul University, **Yahia H. Zoubir** KEDGE Business School

Owner / Yayın Sahibi: Burhanettin Duran, on behalf of (adına) SET VAKFI İktisadi İşletmesi (2008) / ISSN 1302-177X

Managing Editor / Sorumlu Yazı İşleri Müdürü: Mehmet Nuri Altun

Printing House / Basım Yeri: Turkuvaz Haberleşme ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., Güzeltepe Mahallesi
Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi, B Blok No: 29/1/1, Eyüpsultan, İstanbul / Türkiye • Tel: +90.212 354 30 00

Yayın Türü ve Şekli: Yaygın Süreli Yayın / 3 Aylık-İngilizce

The views expressed therein, remain the sole responsibility of the authors; they do not represent the view of the Editorial Board or the SETA Foundation. All Rights Reserved.

Insight Turkey is a peer-reviewed journal indexed by the following databases and indexes: Bibliography of Asian Studies, Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO), EBSCO, Elsevier Bibliographic Databases, Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), European Sources Online (ESO), GALE-Cengage, Gender Studies Database, Index Islamicus, International Bibliography of Book Reviews of Scholarly Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences (IBR), International Bibliography of Periodical Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences (IBZ), International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), International Political Science Abstracts (IPSA), JSTOR, Lancaster Index to Defence and International Security Literature, Left Index, Middle East & Central Asian Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences Bibliographies, Scopus, Social Services Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, TRDİZİN Index (ULAKBİM), Worldwide Political Science Abstracts, World Affairs Online (WAO).

EDITORIAL OFFICE / YAYIN İDARE ADRESİ

Nenehatun Caddesi No: 66 GOP/Çankaya, 06700 Ankara/Türkiye

Tel: +90.312.551-2100 • Fax: +90.312.551-2190

editor@insightturkey.com • www.insightturkey.com



Contents

FALL 2022 • VOLUME 24 NO. 4

Editor's Note

4

COMMENTARIES

Iran in the Wake of Mahsa Amini's Death

HAKKI UYGUR

11

The Role of the Gulf in Iraq after 2017

MOHAMMED MUAZAZ AL-HADITHY

23

The Chaos of the Iraqi Constitutional System and Failure of Government

GHAZI ALSIKOTY

37

COVID-19 Crisis and EU: Liberal Values versus National Interest

SADDAM ABDULKARIM OBAID and NOR AISHAH HANIFA

51

ARTICLES

Iran and the Gulf: The Era of Hassan Rouhani

MAHJOOB ZWEIRI

65

Israel and the Syrian Crisis: Ardent Desire and Restrain Risk

YUSRI HAZRAN

83

COVID-19 in Palestine: Nationalism and Sovereignty

YOUSEF M. ALJAMAL, ILISE BENSUSHAN COHEN, and PHILIPP O. AMOUR

105

Reconsidering 'EU Actress' in Changing Geopolitics of the
Eastern Mediterranean Region

DİLEK LATİF and NUSRET SİNAN EVCAN

123

Small State Foreign Policy in Central Asia: The Cases of
Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan

FATMA ASLI KELKİTLİ

145

Increasing Realism in Turkish Foreign Policy during Post-Davutođlu Era

ABDURRAHMAN GÜMÜŞ

167

REVIEW ARTICLE

Making Sense of International Order(s): Contending Theories

ÖZGÜR ÖZTÜRK

187

BOOK REVIEWS

Turkey and the EU in an Energy Security Society:
The Case of Natural Gas

DİCLE KORKMAZ

Reviewed by Şule Şahan

197

The Fourth Ordeal: A History of the Muslim
Brotherhood in Egypt, 1968-2018

VICTOR J. WILLI

Reviewed by Ömer Şipal

208

Sea Change: Ottoman Textiles between the
Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean

AMANDA PHILLIPS

Reviewed by Teoman Kenn Küçük

199

Between Empire and Nation: Muslim Reform
in the Balkans

MILENA B. METHODIEVA

Reviewed by Faika Çelik

211

The Faces of Contemporary Populism in
Western Europe and the US

KARINE TOURNIER-SOL and MARIE GAYTE

Reviewed by Ambreen Yousuf

201

EU, Turkey, and Counter-Terrorism: Fighting
the PKK and ISIS

ETHEM İLBİZ and CHRISTIAN KAUNERT

Reviewed by Büşra Öztürk

213

Justice and Leadership in Early Islamic
Courts

INTISAR A. RABB and

ABIGAIL KRASNER BALBALE

Reviewed by Muhamed Riyaz Chenganakkattil

203

China's Economic and Political Presence in the
Middle East and South Asia

MEHRAN HAGHIRIAN and LUCIANO ZACCARA

Reviewed by Mustafa Altıntaş

216

A Political Theory of Muslim Democracy

RAVZA ALTUNTAŞ-ÇAKIR

Reviewed by Afshan Khan

206

The Foreign Policy of Islamist Political Parties:
Ideology in Practice

MOHAMED-ALI ADRAOUI

Reviewed by Haşim Koç

218

EDITOR'S NOTE

MUHİTTİN ATAMAN

The regions surrounding Türkiye, i.e. Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, Black Sea, and South Caucasus, continue to experience war, political instability, economic crises, and humanitarian problems. However, if we focus specifically on the Middle East, we can see that several paradoxical developments have taken place. On the one hand, many active crises exist in the Middle East, as both the global super-power rivalry and the Arab Spring continue to influence regional affairs. Specifically, some traditional issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian question, continue to influence regional political balances. On the other hand, significant initiatives are leading to regional stability. Regional powers such as Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been trying to consolidate their regional and global effectiveness and a process of normalization between several states is underway.

Many regional states, such as Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, are deeply involved in domestic problems. Iran has been dealing with protests for more than two months, with hundreds of civilians and members of the security forces having lost their lives. It seems that the current wave of protests will have important implications for the future of the Iranian regime. Post-invasion Iraq is still struggling to eliminate political chaos as the near-state failure conditions continue. The two external powers, the U.S. and Iran, continue to affect Iraqi politics which further deteriorates the situation. Iran, especially, has tight control over the political administration in Iraq.

As stated above, many regional countries have initiated a significant normalization process, with the Gulf states starting an intra-Gulf normalization process at the beginning of 2021. Other Gulf states have decided to normalize their relations with Qatar, even though they have held different policies towards the Arab Spring. Intra-Arab cooperation, solidarity and brotherhood were emphasized during the opening ceremony of the World Cup in Doha. The Amir of Qatar, Tamim al-Thani welcomed the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Muhammad bin Salman and Egyptian President Sisi, among others. Indeed, Amir Tamim made a friendly gesture by watching one of Saudi Arabia's matches from the tribunes.

Furthermore, other dimensions, such as Turkish-Arab, Israeli-Arab, and Iranian-Arab normalization processes, have been initiated. Türkiye has normalized its relations with many regional states, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Currently, it is trying to normalize its relations with the remaining states, most notably Egypt and Syria. In this context, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with Egyptian President Abdulfattah al-Sisi during the World Cup opening ceremony in Doha.

Besides the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean and the South Caucasus regions also host influential problems. In the north, the Türkiye-Azerbaijan axis has forced regional (even global) powers to accept the current status quo, the liberation of the Nagorno-Karabakh territories of Azerbaijan. Türkiye and Azerbaijan have successfully mobilized other Turkish states to contribute to their policy perspectives. In the South, Türkiye has been trying to prevent the isolationist efforts of Greece and its supporters in the Eastern Mediterranean with the Turkish-Libyan axis emerging as a central dimension in the region.

Considering the increasing political, economic, and ecological problems, the regional actors will continue to recalibrate their policies in line with future regional and global changes. Therefore, regional powers have been trying to diversify their foreign relations and thus increase their autonomy in their foreign policies.

This issue of *Insight Turkey* covers a wide range of topics while providing an insightful analysis of regional developments, with a special focus on the Middle East.

Our look at the region starts with Hakkı Uygur's timely thoughts on the recent protests and violence in Iran. After Mahsa Amini died, Sunni groups, especially Kurds and Balochs, took the lead in the protests against the mandatory headscarf rule, resulting in more loss of life. Even though the protests in Tehran, the capital, were mostly supported by the middle- and upper-classes, they didn't get much support from the broad masses. Instead, they turned into protests by

college students, usually led by artists and athletes who were part of the elite. When the Persian media and opposition activists outside the country received a lot of attention, most reformists kept quiet. Different political groups have been using the events to work out how to share power after Khamenei. But the fact that protests have been continuing for three months, and the government hasn't used its usual "iron fist" method to quell them, raises questions. During the same time, Iran's relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Republic of Azerbaijan have been tense. The author argues that this is how domestic and foreign policies change and affect each other.

In the same context, Mahjoob Zweiri's research article provides an insight into defining Rouhani's foreign policy discourse and slogans, primarily towards the GCC, while addressing significant shifts in the region that implicated Iran's Rouhani stance towards the GCC and its members. The paper concludes by discussing how the recent Iranian elections and Ebrahim Raisi will affect the future of Iran-GCC relations. Analyses revealed that Rouhani had difficulty engaging with the GCC countries due to impediments imposed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Similarly, the article examines whether Rouhani achieved his foreign ambitions, and was able to provide a vision for the challenges that await the Raisi presidency during his era, in Iran's foreign policy toward the GCC.

Our focus on the region continues with Mohammed Muazaz al-Hadithy's analysis of the role of the Gulf in Iraq after 2017 based on the complicated relationship between the Gulf and Iraq from 2003 to 2017. It also looks at the effects of the Gulf crisis and how the relationship between the two countries has changed. The study predicts how the relationship will change in the future based on a set of factors related to Iraqi politics, Gulf foreign policy, and the factors that affect the Gulf's role in Iraq.

Following on from this, Ghazi Alsikoty's commentary attempts to present and analyze the chaotic nature of Iraq's constitutional system since 2005 and its impact on political-economic and social crises. The study also tries to investigate sectarian issues and political quotas that have arisen as a result of a deep divide between the culture of reactionary parties that do not believe in the democratic modern state, the philosophy of liberal democracy, institutionalism, the separation of powers, or respect for human rights.

In the following article, Yusri Hazran analyzes Israel's strategic stance toward the Syrian crisis, drawing connections between Israel's historical understanding of Syria and its role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, current strategic considerations, and the impact of the Lebanese syndrome on Israel's historical collective memory. Syria's deep roots in revolutionary pan-Arabism and its consistent

backing for the fight against the Jewish state have long made it a prime target for Israel's enemies. Israel hoped that the 'Arab Spring' uprisings would lead to the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime or at least significantly weaken it, but it has refrained from any military intervention, primarily due to what may be called the 'Lebanese syndrome,' or the fear of renewed entanglement and a repeat of its bitter experience in the First Lebanon War.

Next, the article by Yousef M. Aljamal, Ilise Benshushan Cohen, and Philipp O. Amour looks at the early spread of COVID-19 in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the context of nationalism and sovereignty. The authors argue that the spread of COVID-19 has been difficult for Palestinians due to domestic and regional interactions and limited sovereignty, undermining their ability to combat the virus. Yet, the pandemic awoke Palestinian national sentiment, reminding them of their disunity and lack of sovereignty. Despite these obstacles, the article shows that the Palestinian health system attempted but failed to resolve the crisis and that COVID-19 has only highlighted how Palestinians cannot operate practically independently of Israel.

With the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, a major question also arose regarding the feasibility of applying liberal ideas in international politics and whether national interests would take precedence over liberal values in the international system. In our final commentary, the focus shifts to the EU area, with Saddam A. H. Obaid and Aishah Hanifa providing a topical commentary on whether or not national interests will prevail over the liberal values of the EU during the crises. The authors contend that while liberal values thrive in times of peace, they are put to the test during times of crisis. They can sometimes fail because national interest calculations are deeply embedded in nation-states.

Due to foreign, security, and energy policy considerations, the EU has also been involved in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Dilek Latif and Nusret Sinan Evcan's timely analysis seeks to contextualize the EU's engagement in the Eastern Mediterranean region in light of recent developments and political factors. The discovery of hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean shifted existing foreign policies, increased the region's geopolitical significance, and acted as a catalyst for new geopolitical dynamics and political alignments. The hydrocarbon deposits have the potential to diversify resources and serve as a bridge for greater regional cooperation. Instead, the volatile geopolitical environment instils fear and threat perceptions.

Fatma Aslı Kelkitli investigates and contrasts the foreign policy choices of three minor Central Asian governments, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, in the post-independence period in our penultimate research article. Turkmenistan's foreign policy differs from the other three countries, despite their shared Soviet heritage, landlocked location, and population size. While Tajik-

istan and Kyrgyzstan align with Russia, Turkmenistan maintains permanent neutrality. This paper contends that Turkmenistan's natural resource wealth, along with fewer domestic dangers and geographical limits than Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, enabled it to conduct a more impartial and independent foreign policy. However, excessive reliance on China as the principal consumer of Turkmen natural gas may make it challenging to maintain lasting neutrality.

In the concluding research article, Abdurrahman Gümüş compares Turkish foreign policy in the post-Davutoğlu era with the previous period and analyzes the changes and continuities in these two periods. In the first years of the Justice and Development Party period, Turkish foreign policy featured soft power and cooperation-based characteristics. While maintaining its proactive and multi-dimensional aspects, there were many crucial changes in Turkish foreign policy in the post-Davutoğlu era. These changes led to increasing realism, autonomous foreign policy, and the rise of deterrence and the sphere of regional influence.

With one more year coming to an end, we are pleased to present to our readers yet another insightful issue of *Insight Turkey* that has attempted to analyze current regional and international developments comprehensively. We are looking forward to providing you with more next year! ■

LOCAL VIEWS ON GLOBAL NEWS.

Read Daily
to keep up with
changing
Turkey and
the world.

